

The Elementary English Review

SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT

VOL. XIX

MARCH 1942

No. 3

SPECIAL NUMBER

Language and Composition

English Teaching in Argentina and Brazil ROBERT KING HALL

Standards in English JOHN P. MILLIGAN

Improving English Usage ELIZABETH GUILFOILE

A Greater Independence in Written Expression PHILA HUMPHREYS

Opportunity to Develop Skill in Communicating
Ideas ANNIE M. McCOWEN

An Intimate Glimpse of Grammar LOUIS FOLEY

Pen Points and Ink Spots JOHN H. TREANOR

EDITORIAL

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

Detroit, Michigan

J. L. CERTAIN, *Editor*

\$2.50 a Year Monthly from October through May Single Copies 40 Cents

The Elementary English Review

Established, 1924, by C. C. Certain

J. L. Certain, *Editor*

VOL. XIX

MARCH 1942

No. 3

BOARD OF ADVISERS

Dr. Charles S. Pendleton,
Professor of the Teaching
of English, George Peabody
College for Teachers,
Nashville, Tennessee

Miss Fannie J. Ragland,
Director of Upper Elementary
Grades, Public Schools,
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. Holland D. Roberts,
Professor of English,
School of Education,
Leland Stanford Junior
University, Stanford
University, California

Dr. M. R. Trabue, Dean,
School of Education,
Pennsylvania State
College, State College,
Pennsylvania

SUBSCRIPTION RATE
\$2.50 for one year
of eight issues

Published
1941
January, February, March
April, May, October
November, December

Table of Contents

English Teaching in Argentina and Brazil	77
ROBERT KING HALL	
Standards in English	85
JOHN P. MILLIGAN	
Improving English Usage	88
ELIZABETH GUILFOILE	
A Greater Independence in Written Expression	93
PHILA HUMPHREYS	
Opportunity to Develop Skill in Communicating Ideas	99
ANNIE M. McCOWEN	
An Intimate Glimpse of Grammar	105
LOUIS FOLEY	
Pen Points and Ink Spots	109
JOHN H. TREANOR	
BOOK REVIEWS	111
EDITORIAL	112

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. [†]Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoa Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. [†]Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscription (total \$2.74), on single copies 8 cents (total 48 cents.) [†]Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. [†]Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. [†]All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. [†]Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

Copyright, 1942 by J. L. Certain
Printed in the U. S. A.

1942 additions to the McKee Series

LANGUAGE FOR MEANING

By Paul McKee
Lucile Harrison
Annie McCowen

Grades

II LET'S TALK

III MAKING WORDS WORK

IV GAINING SKILL WITH WORDS

V SHARING EXPERIENCES

VI COMMUNICATING IDEAS

Continuing the series in the
Junior High School Years

Now ready
MAKING MEANING CLEAR
7th year

By Clarence Stratton
John E. Blossom
Prudence Lanphear

In preparation
EXPRESSING IDEAS CLEARLY
8th year

This highly successful series by leading specialists offers a complete and clearly organized language program. It features throughout emphasis on meaning—use of pupil experience as the basis for expression—correct oral habits—abundant practice—definite daily lessons.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

Boston

New York

Chicago

Dallas

Atlanta

San Francisco

FOR EVERYONE WHO likes to tell, hear, or collect stories; for the principal or teacher in charge of school or classroom programs; for librarians, parents, and anyone who wishes to follow

The Way of the Storyteller

By **RUTH SAWYER**, author of *The Least One*, *The Long Christmas*, the Newbery Medal winner *Roller Skates*, and many others.

The story of Ruth Sawyer's storytelling, not written as a manual or textbook, but out of the feeling, wisdom, and experience of a storyteller who has spent a lifetime at it. Check-lists, bibliography, and a "technique to abolish technique," give factual pointers; eleven complete stories serve as examples; but mostly this is a book to give the reader a sense of the importance and the rich heritage of storytelling.

Set it beside Anne T. Eaton's *Reading with Children* (now in its third large printing, \$2.50) on that shelf of invaluable reference books that are also delights to the spirit. Send for your approval copy today. \$2.50.

THE VIKING PRESS, 18 E. 48 St., New York

As always . . .

The APRIL Review

is the annual special number on

READING

A new Aspect . . .

of English Teaching

will be presented in the MAY issue:

THE ARTS AND LITERATURE

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

Box 67, North End Sta. Detroit, Michigan

Two dollars and fifty cents a year

*Thorough English training with emphasis on use.
Practical...definite outcomes...Proven carry-over of skills.*

**LANGUAGE ARTS
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS**

TRABUE AND GOODRICH

Grades 3-6

**LANGUAGE ARTS
FOR MODERN YOUTH**

CASSELL, OBERHOLTZER,
AND BRUNER

Grades 7-8

If you are changing English this year and have not seen these books, let us know.

CHARLES E. MERRILL COMPANY - NEW YORK

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING

Now available are the first three handbooks in this new series edited by Hollis L. Caswell, Professor of Education and Director, Division of Instruction, Teachers College, Columbia University.

No. 1. Teaching the Slow Learner. By W. B. FEATHERSTONE. 110 pp. Paper 75 cents. Presents the essential characteristics and needs of slow learners, and suggests practical ways and means of designing and carrying on a curriculum well adjusted to them.

No. 2. How to Study the Behavior of Children. By GERTRUDE DRISCOLL. 96 pp. Paper 60 cents. Shows the importance of studying the behavior of children and how the busy teacher or supervisor can do this in the day-by-day procedures of the school.

No. 3. Guiding Children's Reading through Experiences. By ROMA GANS. 96 pp. Paper 60 cents. Presents a number of suggestions for improving reading as an experience and also as a tool for intelligent citizenship.

OTHER HANDBOOKS IN PREPARATION

Teaching Elementary Science. By GERALD S. CRAIG.

Failure, Marks, and Grouping in the Elementary School. By WILLARD S. ELSBREE.

Meeting Speech Needs of Elementary School Children. By GEORGE A. KOPP.

Art in the Elementary School. By EDWIN ZIEGFELD.

Boys and Girls in the Elementary School Explore Literature. By JEAN BETZNER.

Descriptive circular sent on request.

Bureau of Publications
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York City

*Get an Early Start
in Speech Training with*
OUR FIRST SPEECH BOOK

by M. PEARL LLOYD

Published January 2, 1942

A delightful collection of rhymes, games, and music for teaching correct speech habits in the primary grades. Specific directions for overcoming speech defects. Selections for choral reading. Charmingly illustrated by Zenhya Gay.

*More Color, More Vitality
in Composition Work with*
GROWTH IN ENGLISH

by SIMPSON and ADAMS

For Grades 3-6

The subject matter stimulates self-expression, for life, literature, and other parts of the curriculum form its substance. The only series to provide Charts of Attainments to show how content and skills are combined in an integrated program of achievement.

Published by

NEWSON & COMPANY

72 Fifth Avenue

Publishers of Better Schoolbooks

New York, N. Y.

The Results Show the Difference

Now Your Pupils Can

LAUGH AND LEARN GRAMMAR

through this really original text which will teach them sentence structure in spite of themselves and exercise their sense of humor at the same time.

Pupils will be *surprised* into reading the explanations and doing the tests and exercises in this book because of their compelling content. Much of this content is based on the amazing and comical adventures of the fabulous Paul Bunyan.

The book covers grammatical material essential at the junior high school level. It is not a handbook, but a humanitarian attempt to present the subject in a palatable manner. *Illustrated with drawings.*

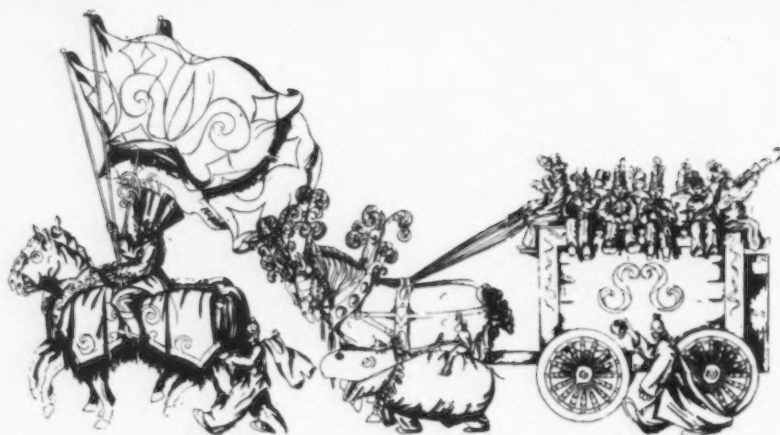
Ask for **LAUGH AND LEARN GRAMMAR** by Irwin H. Braun.

Price, \$1.25

HARR WAGNER PUBLISHING COMPANY

609 Mission Street

San Francisco, California



A Parade of Macmillan Spring Books

CIRCUS PARADE

By Lydia Furbush

A great circus parade in full color makes a fascinating *panorama* picture book that every young child will welcome in the spring. (Ages 2-10) \$2.00

THE BAMBOO THE COCONUT

By Armstrong Sperry

Two books of lively appealing stories give you unusual information about two strange trees. Lovely color pictures on each page. (Ages 8-12) Each, \$1.00

MISSEE LEE

By Arthur Ransome

The Swallows and Amazons have a new adventure. This time it is with the active daughter of a notorious Chinese pirate. Illustrated. (Ages 10-14) \$2.50

HOUSEBOAT SUMMER

By Elizabeth Coatsworth

Two children have an adventuresome vacation on a houseboat in a Maine cove, and explore the exciting countryside. Illustrated. (Ages 8-12) \$1.75

TWIG

By Elizabeth Orton Jones

A drab city backyard becomes a fairy playground for a little girl. Beautiful illustrations. (Ages 6-10) \$2.00

AT THE SEASHORE

By W. W. and Irene Robinson

Ann and Bill have a glorious day at the seashore! Large color pictures of the things they discover. (Ages 4-6) \$2.00

JOHNNY JUMP UP

By John Hooper

A picture-story book about the adventure of a young boy in the "horse and buggy age." Illustrated. (Ages 6-8) \$1.50

JORGE'S JOURNEY

By Alice Curtis Desmond

The exciting adventure of a small boy who lives in the interesting coffee country of Brazil. Illustrated. (Ages 8-12) \$1.75

OUT OF DOORS IN SPRING OUT OF DOORS IN SUMMER

By Clarence J. Hylander

Two books to help you have great fun outdoors in spring and summer. Many illustrations. (Ages 8-12) Each, \$1.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY • 60 Fifth Avenue • New York

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

VOL. XIX

MARCH 1942

No. 3

English Teaching in Argentina and Brazil*

ROBERT KING HALL†

*Harvard University Commission on English Language Studies
Cambridge*

INTEREST IN ENGLISH instruction is not a new one in either Argentina or Brazil. As you know, both of these countries have had educational systems functioning under the guidance of some form of central ministry of education since their change to a republican form of government. In the nearly eighty years since the founding of the first stable constitutional government in Argentina there have been no less than twenty-three major educational plans either adopted or vigorously projected by the ministries. The present plan has alone undergone six major reforms. Yet in every one of these many official curricula there has been some provision made for English instruction. In Brazil, since the fall of the Empire, there have been seven major national plans of education actually adopted. In every one there has been provision for this instruction. In both nations English has traditionally occupied from eight to ten per cent of the total curriculum. In nearby Chile, which has

enjoyed a very high reputation for its educational system among Latin-American nations, English instruction has at times formed nearly fourteen per cent of the entire curriculum. In every one of the most recent plans for educational reform (the Iriondo Plan of 1934 and the Coll Plan of 1939 in Argentina and the Capanema Plan of 1940 in Brazil) there has been an evidence of increased, rather than diminishing interest in English instruction.

In the face of such evidence of a stable and long-term interest in English, the legal and political history of Brazil and Argentina during the past five years may merit considerable scrutiny. For English instruction is today subject to very severe regulations and restrictions which bear little relation to the admitted importance of the subject as a cultural study.

* Presented at the Conference on the Teaching of English, held at the Rockefeller Foundation, in New York City, November 1 and 2, 1941.

† In April, Dr. Hall will leave for Buenos Aires where he will lecture and conduct seminars on English teaching methods applicable for foreign students, at the Instituto Cultural Argentino Norteamericano.

Time does not permit an exhaustive examination of the social and political problems involved in Latin-America's great bodies of unassimilated foreign population groups. Suffice it that today the governments of all of Latin-America, and particularly of Brazil, are becoming increasingly aware of the tragic mistake in their historic policy of permitting social, economic, and political segregation of "colonies" of foreign population. In Argentina, a nation of something over thirteen millions with roughly one-third of its population concentrated in the metropolitan areas of the six major cities, the problem has not been particularly acute. Between 1910 and 1938 approximately 3,215,000 foreign immigrants entered Argentina. Of this number, two-thirds were either Spanish or Italian and were readily absorbed into the national language and culture. In Brazil, with more than forty-two millions, there has been an immigration of about four million persons during the past half century. Some seventy foreign countries are represented, but among the major streams of immigration the most outstanding have been those of the Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, German, Austrian, Japanese, Italian, Polish and Russian. Of these, only the Germanic immigrants, the Japanese, Poles, and to a lesser degree, the Russians, have not accepted Brazilian culture and refused to break up their "colonies." The total population of these isolated and unassimilated bodies is today only a matter of conjecture. It is certain, however, that the size is sufficient to cause grave concern on the part of the Brazilian authorities.

It has been traditional for all Latin-American countries to permit and often to welcome the establishment of schools, churches and other semi-public institutions by foreign organizations and sup-

ported by foreign funds. This has seemed an acceptable solution to the ever present financial problem of creating and supporting by public funds the necessary civic services. It was natural that most of the schools which were founded in foreign colonies elected to conduct their classes in the language of the country from which the teachers, funds, and many of the parents of the students had come. Especially was this true in the German colonies in the southern states of Brazil. It must be admitted, moreover, that the Brazilians recognized and approved the unquestionable superiority of many of the institutions. With the rise of Nazism in European Germany, however, there appeared in Brazil the evidences of the new order. Young teachers, fresh from German schools, teaching in the German language, armed with Nazi textbooks, even financed at times by Nazi funds, began to preach a political gospel quite unacceptable to the Brazilian government.

In January, 1938, the *Interventor* of Paraná signed a decree forbidding any school to teach in a foreign language. In March of the same year Santa Catarina followed suit with an even more severe law. On May 4, 1938 the Federal Government published a Decree-Law (No. 406) making it obligatory that all rural schools be taught in Portuguese, that all teaching materials be written in Portuguese, that all teachers be Brazilian born. It made it illegal to publish any review, book, or newspaper in a foreign language in any rural area, and reserved the right to censor all foreign language publications, wherever printed. Rural areas were later defined as any part of the country not in the Federal District, a state capital, or a legal port of entry. On December 30, 1938, President Vargas and Minister Capanema signed the De-

cree-Law No. 1,006 which forbade the use of any book which has not been approved by the Ministry of Education "in any school . . . pre-primary, primary, normal, professional, or secondary, in all the Republic." On August 25, 1939, the Decree-Law No. 1,545 was signed which provided, among other things, that the government should "exercise vigilance over the teaching of foreign languages," that no school might be directed by a foreigner except in the case of religious bodies not recognizing nationalities, that no foreign language might be used in public assembly, and that no Brazilian youth under eighteen years of age might travel unaccompanied to foreign countries or remain abroad after the return of his parents or guardians. In passing it might be stated that similar, but rather less stringent, rules are now adopted in Argentina.

It was inevitable that the proud and highly race-conscious people of the colonies should resist. Bootleg illegal education became very commonplace. Secret schools came into being.

The story of the clandestine foreign schools of Brazil is a long, and occasionally, a brutal one. In the first two years more than two thousand secret and illegal schools teaching in German were discovered and closed. In a single municipality in the state of São Paulo there were more than fifty Japanese schools closed during the first nine months after the signing of the law. Brazilian antagonism to foreign education and to the use of foreign languages as a vehicle of instruction has been greatly intensified by the discovery that these clandestine schools were also the centers of most flagrant and militaristic propaganda. It is the double misfortune of those engaged in instruction in the English language that they must today share the restrictions

and the suspicions leveled at the more militant foreign language schools of the Germans and Japanese. Existing English and American schools have had to undergo a suspicion of their sincerity which is, I think, quite unwarranted by either their past history or their present intentions.

If the instruction in English is today hemmed in by many governmental restrictions, it has on the other hand suffered no loss in interest on the part of the general population. English classes in the available institutions and private classes given by persons who are, unfortunately, far too often only partially qualified, have been well attended and very popular. American and English books, plays, and motion pictures are following very closely. Yet, any extension of English language instruction to meet this growing public interest will inevitably be forced to follow certain lines which are in part imposed by traditions and in part are the result of the recent stringent federal regulations.

The most powerful of present instruments for English language instruction in both Argentina and Brazil is the secondary school. The Argentine federal educational plan (a modification of the Garro Plan which was instituted in 1913) provides for a fourfold secondary school system composed of *Colegios Nacionales*, normal schools, commercial schools, and industrial schools. The most important of these from the point of view of language instruction is the *Colegio Nacional*. It is a five-year secondary school having a classical curriculum designed to prepare for entrance into the university. There are more than sixty of these schools in Argentina and the 24,000 students who are in daily attendance constitute the intellectually and socially selected elite of the nation. English occupies 22 se-

mester hours distributed over three years in the total of fifty-two courses and 306 semester hours which are the required curriculum.

Argentine normal schools are in general four years in length leading to an elementary school license and followed by an upper school having three-year concentrations in either science or letters for prospective secondary school teachers. English occupies 18 and 28 semester hours respectively in these last two fields of concentration. About 34,000 or a trifle over half the current normal school population receives some portion of this training.

There are about sixty industrial schools, but since their programs vary much more than do those of other schools it is impossible to calculate the actual number of students who receive some English training. In the better schools, which enroll only a small fraction of the total of 7,000 industrial students in the nation, the work is supervised by one of the faculties in a national university. In these, 12 semester hours of English are offered interchangeably with an equal amount of French. It is only natural that this latter Romance language should be the more popular because of its ease for Latin tongues.

There are about twenty commercial schools with a total enrollment of something like seven thousand students. In these there are two basic curricula offered which extend for four and five years if taken in the day schools and for an additional year if taken at night. English is offered for 32 and 39 semester hours in these, but again French is an alternative language and holds the traditional favor of the students.

As a sort of shadow system in the Argentine school organization is the incorporated private secondary school.

There are more than 300 such institutions enrolling about 25,000 students. Because no student may receive credit for his scholastic work unless it is taken in either a national school or in a private school incorporated with a national school and inspected by federal inspectors, the work in these private institutions is identical with that of the public schools.

At the level of higher education, there are the six national universities of Argentina which enroll a trifle more than 26,000 students in the regular faculties and about 12,000 more in the 45 special institutes which are annexed. English instruction is available to all of these students but with few exceptions it is considered an alternate with French, German, or Italian. French has for generations been the most popular of the four languages. The two largest sources of trained English teachers for the schools are the faculties of philosophy in the various national universities and the National Institute of Secondary Teachers (*Instituto Nacional de Profesorado Secundario*). This latter institution has approximately one thousand advanced students, many of whom have also attended either the entirety or a portion of the course in one of the university faculties. The English section is not large, having once enrolled as high as 74 students in the beginning course, but now limiting itself to an entering class of 30 because of circumscribed teaching facilities.

These, then, are the numbers of students who may be expected to receive English training in the recognized schools of a nation of thirteen millions.

What of Brazil?

Brazil is unique among Latin-American countries for its degree of decentralization of education. Since the *Acto Adicional* of 1834, all elementary education has been in the province of private or

state control. Since the foreign language school laws of 1938 it has been illegal to instruct in a foreign language in the elementary grades, even where private initiative and boarding school organization permitted. Traditionally, the Brazilian government has maintained a very loose control over secondary education through a system of *equiparação*, or point-by-point comparison with a federal model school as a standard. The standard selected as model is *Collegio Pedro II*, a very formal, classical-type secondary school founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1837. In recent years this control has become more stringent until in 1932 the Basic Law No. 21,241 was written providing that "the only secondary education officially recognized is that given in *Collegio Pedro II* and in establishments under official inspection." There are some two thousand institutions of secondary level in Brazil with approximately one hundred of them federal. In these there is a total of about 108,000 students enrolled with an average attendance of 12% less. The curriculum, and, in fact, all the internal organization of these schools, is regulated by the present federal educational plan (Campos Plan, instituted in 1932). It provides for a five-year basic secondary curriculum of 288 semester hours with 18 semester hours of required English instruction. Following the basic curriculum there are three complementary courses of two years each which are designed to prepare for entrance into the legal, medical, and engineering faculties. Only in the pre-medical course is there provision for English instruction and here it is offered as an alternative to German.

Despite its size, Brazil has only four higher institutions which fulfill the requirements of Brazilian law as being universities. They are the Universities of

Brazil, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Porto Alegre, the latter being in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In addition however, there are 49 schools and isolated faculties distributed in 16 states and the Federal District which teach material of a university caliber. In the majority of these there is some English instruction available, though not obligatory, for the approximately 26,000 students who are currently enrolled.

The foregoing figures, depressingly small though they may seem in nations having a total of something over fifty-five millions, need not be unduly deplored if the standard of the instruction offered is high. Unfortunately, the situation within the classroom is little more encouraging.

The teachers are drawn from three general sources: some are Anglo-Latins who have acquired a practical command of English from speaking in their homes; some are part-time appointees whose major interest is in their professions of medicine, law, or engineering, but who instruct a few hours a week for the additional prestige and revenue of the position; and some very few are thoroughly trained and very competent instructors who have been prepared in one of the teachers' institutes. Probably the best of these latter is the National Institute of Secondary Teachers, which has already been referred to in connection with Argentina. At the head of the English section and acting as a professor of English literature and grammar for many years was Prof. Enrique Drot de Gourville, whose methods and philosophy of language instruction have been indelibly imprinted on Argentine education. His text, the *Modern Handbook of English*, has long been the standard in secondary schools.

As I have indicated before, both Argen-

tina and Brazil exercise the right of censorship over school texts. This has been extended from the mere publication of an approved list of texts to the extreme of actually confiscating and burning of American and English volumes which have been used as additional reading material in the advanced classes. Such apparently innocuous volumes as John Dewey's *School and Society*, and H. G. Well's *Outline of History* are among the number offensive to some officials in Brazil. Annually the ministries publish a list of books which are considered to meet effectively all standards for the federal plan of education. This is a very long list and includes certain standard texts which have long passed the best seller mark, and at the same time some which are privately published by the authors as a matter of professional pride.

Among the foreign volumes which are most often seen in Argentine schools are Walter Ripman's *Dent's First English Book*, and *Second English Book* and the series by Mme. Camerlynck and G. H. Camerlynck published in Paris. This includes *First Steps in English*, *The Girl's Own Book*, *Tom in England*, *Alice in England*, *The Boy's Own Reader*, and *Miss Rod*. Among the Argentine texts the most popular has been *The Modern Handbook of English*, in three volumes, by de Gourville, which is expressly designed for the three courses in the Garro Plan. Josefina Molinelli Wells' text, *My English Book*, also in three volumes, is a somewhat less popular work written to meet the same market as the *Modern Handbook of English*. Rebecca Molinelli Wells, using the pseudonym of Alice Evans, has published a two-volume text, also entitled *My English Book*. Federico L. Burnett is the author of *Reading Book*, one of the few books to use the grammatical method and to break with the

well-established Argentine tradition of phonetic instruction.

I am unaware of any detailed study of the textbooks in use in teaching English in Brazil. Certainly on the basis of visiting a very large number of schools in all parts of that country it has been my impression that greater liberty is allowed in the use of a text than is the case in Argentina. Many of the textbooks are locally printed and represent the work of the instructor in that particular school. In some of the schools of the interior no texts are used at all, largely due to the difficulty and cost of procuring books rather than to any radically different technique of teaching. All work, however, must point to a definite conclusion in the third course. It is federal law that for this the English must come from the following list of books: *David Copperfield*, *Emerson's Essays*, *Tales of Poe*, *Silas Marner*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Jerome's Three Men in a Boat*, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Julius Caesar*, *Stevenson's The Art of Writing*, and *Thackeray's The Four Georges*.

Brazil also differs from Argentina in the lessened importance given to phonetics. It must be confessed, however, and this is based solely on the very subjective evidence of many visits to schools in both countries, that the Argentine schools produce a considerably more proficient student in the division of *spoken* English. In both countries the standard of school-learned English is about on a par with that of school-learned French or German in the schools of this country. Many acquire a superficial ability to translate, but very few ever learn to speak or read for enjoyment. That this is so is certainly not a favorable comment on existing methods of instruction since the secondary and higher students of Argentina and

Brazil represent a much more highly selected portion of the population than does the American high school student.

No evaluation of the teaching of English in Argentina and Brazil would be complete without mention of a number of interesting institutions which have been financed and directed by private interests. Certainly the two best known are the *Instituto Cultural Argentino-Norteamericano* in Buenos Aires and the *Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos* in Rio de Janeiro. Of these the Argentine institute is probably the better known and certainly much the older and more firmly established. *ICANA*, as it is familiarly known in Buenos Aires, serves a dual purpose; it conducts large and very successful English language classes, and it acts as the central agency through which nearly all the exchange fellowships and scholarships with American schools are filled. Its classes in English are taught in the traditional Argentine manner with great emphasis placed on literary and phonetic studies. One reason for the very high degree of success that Argentine fellowship students have enjoyed in former years is the inflexible rule that no person will be considered who has not done the equivalent of the full seven-year course offered by the Institute. The last of the seven years is devoted to an intensive study of the particular technical vocabulary identified with the candidate's profession.

The Institute in Brazil is showing remarkable progress in organizing language classes, but it is still hampered severely by lack of experience and of funds. Its classes reach tens where those of *ICANA* reach hundreds and it must be admitted that in the beginning the standard of instruction was rather less. Both of these institutes offer lectures and open forums in English featuring American and European scholars.

Probably the most interesting experiment in English language instruction which has been recently attempted in Argentina and Brazil is that of the radio school. Brazil may probably be credited with the earlier use of the radio as a teaching instrument since the Ministry of Education has operated the service of Educational Radio Broadcasting since 1923. Of most immediate interest to students of English language teaching, however, is the Argentine School of the Air (*Escuela del Aire*) which was created by Ministerial decree in 1939. In the first two years of the existence of the school, its leaders experimented with organization and methods of broadcasting. They limited their efforts to an intensive program of language instruction in the subjects given in the secondary school, and at the same time offered certain general courses for elementary school-age children.

The students are enrolled by mail and are immediately provided with inexpensive pamphlets printed with the text of the radio script in the form of lessons. These are carefully prepared copies of typical classroom periods in the federally directed secondary schools. Even errors in pronunciation are introduced and then ironed out. The student is thus enabled to sit before his radio in some remote portion of the nation while he combines the visual and auditory training which he would have received were he in an ordinary school. To make the illusion even more real, it has been the practice to reproduce actual classroom exchanges between teachers and pupils who have been borrowed for the occasion from neighboring schools in Buenos Aires. Lessons and "home-work" are prepared and mailed to the central office of the school where they are corrected and then returned with the instructor's

comments. The teachers who have thus far been employed in this work are without exception practicing teachers taken from the federal schools of the capital. They are also persons for whom English is an *acquired* language. It is a common belief among Argentine educators that only those who have themselves experienced the difficulties of learning English are able to teach it properly to Latin students. The standard of pronunciation and grammar is amazingly high, yet in even the most accomplished, there is a flavor of artificiality about the rhetoric which makes it evident that the speaker is foreign to English-speaking nations.

This stilted, academic, and at times somewhat antiquated manner of speech has caused a most understandable but unfortunate psychological bar to better English. Persons who speak most atrocious English and many who are unable to follow even a simple sentence when spoken slowly, are too often prone to excuse their inability on the grounds that they were trained in "English English," and not in "American." Among the great body of "private English instructors" who give lessons by the hour to the ever increasing number of persons who are turning to it as a cultural and commercial language, there is something of a rivalry over purity of American or English accents. Since many of these teachers are native-born Brazilians and Argentines of English parentage, or are persons of the lower income brackets who are augmenting their salaries with a bit of amateur tutoring as a side line, one can only sympathize with the confusion of their students.

What the future of English instruction in Argentina and Brazil may be is a matter of conjecture. The interest is there. Handicaps in the form of governmental restrictions, prejudice of foreign methods,

well established vested interests, and the natural inertia of Latin-America, are also present. As merely an interested amateur in the realm of English semantics, I do not feel qualified to judge the relative merits of various systems which have been developed both here and in England for the teaching of English to the foreign-born. But as a student of Latin-American education I will venture certain generalizations.

The only ultimate method of changing and improving English instruction is through introducing a change in the federal educational laws. This will necessitate the active approval of the national ministries which in turn implies both educational and political salesmanship. Before any such change has a chance of becoming law, or of becoming effective if it should become law, it must be accepted by the large body of influential teachers holding life appointments in federal schools. For the older of this group, change will come slowly and grudgingly, if at all. The solution must be one that strikes at the younger teachers who are currently coming to important posts. Certainly the indicated method of accomplishing this conversion is that of first changing *their* teachers. Fortunately in both Argentina and Brazil this is not too difficult a task. Analysis of the outstanding students of English in the very limited number of training institutes will indicate the probable future recipients of teaching positions in these same institutions. Any method by which these gifted students are enabled to prepare themselves more perfectly to achieve their probable goal and at the same time to acquire a sympathetic knowledge of our English language teaching methods is a very positive step toward the goal of better English instruction in Latin-America.

Standards In English

JOHN P. MILLIGAN

Dean of Instruction, State Teachers College
Jersey City, N. J.

THE PROBLEM of standards will not leave us. When we have done all that has been suggested by way of motivation,¹ the results *should* be apparent. No one ought to question the product. But some one will. No matter how much enthusiasm may be engendered by pursuing ever so worthwhile purposes, some annoying fellow will arise and ask: "What did you accomplish?" or "Do they know their grammar?" I should like to answer, therefore three fundamental questions in attempting to settle this matter of standards:

Why must we understand the total program?

What standards must we develop?

How shall we state our standards?

For those who insist, the word standard shall mean: "A type, model, or example for comparison."² There are other definitions, even in the same dictionary, but most of these connote a meaning which is "hard and fast," as we say. In answering my third question, my accepted definition ought to become sensible to you.

The total program

Teachers who work with children at any age will work more effectively in proportion to the extent to which they know what has been and what is to be. Most of us have such knowledge of the English program in a general degree, but this will not do. We must know it more specifically. We must know what is two years away in the program, and what is four years away. I suppose most courses of study call for the mastery of the apostrophe at about the eighth grade level.

But if it is left to the eighth grade teacher alone she cannot do it. All of you are familiar with the presentation of a thoroughgoing lesson on the apostrophe only to find that in the immediate writing of the pupils, apostrophes are used by some students with every word ending in *s*. A skill as complicated as the use of the apostrophe is a long time in the building. It involves a principle that must be understood—not memorized. If the second grade teacher knows that the use of the apostrophe is listed for mastery at the eighth-grade level, she will be alert to establish understanding wherever she can. A study in which I participated³ presents some evidence to prove the truth of this statement. What we discovered was this: that when the teacher called the attention of the children to punctuation occurring in books and in stories dictated to the teacher, the children at the end of the year could *name* these marks and tell *what they were used for*. That, I submit, is significant.

Likewise an eighth grade teacher should, on discovering a weakness in a pupil's English, try to determine what experiences that pupil has had with this particular skill. Carefully kept records should be revealing. A discovery of what has gone before becomes the basis of attack upon the present difficulty.

It may be desirable to include in our statement of standards, to be discussed later, what Bessie Bacon Goodrich calls the principle of "recognition in use."⁴

¹ See Dr. Milligan's paper on "Motivation of English Expression" in the January, 1942, *Review*.

² Funk and Wagnalls Desk Standard Dictionary.

³ See *The Elementary English Review*, March, 1941.

⁴ See her *Language Program in Grades One and Two*. Merrill, 1936.

She suggests that if we want tenth graders, for example, to understand two types of literature—the essay and the lyric poem—the sixth grade teacher should mention these types as the children come to read them in their anthologies, and in their library reading. The responsibility of the tenth grade teacher in this connection is to know the essays and the lyric poems that the students have read in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades.

If you accept the implications of knowing the total program, you will need, if you have not already done so, to embark on a study involving teachers of kindergarten through high school. The standards set up must be understood by all, agreed on by all; and each must see his or her contribution toward the development of a particular standard.

Standards to be developed

What standards shall be developed? This is a question which each school system must answer for itself. Frankly, I do not care what standards you set up. If you go about it as I have suggested, so that each will understand all, it will be all right with me. The trouble up to now is not that we have had no standards, and not that standards have been too low; rather the difficulty has been failure to attack our problem co-operatively. That may sound trite, but it is true. When I read a college student's paper and discover a lack of fundamental sentence sense, there is no point in getting angry at the student, or at the preceding teachers. What ought to stir me to action is the contemplation of the system which allowed this to happen. The roots of the trouble are deep. This student was allowed to go along without solving his own thought problems. I do not mean he should be "kept back" a year. Nothing has been proven more clearly than this; that retardation is not the answer to

academic adjustment. What this student needed, of course—and still needs—was more of the right kind of motivation; and his teachers needed a better view of the total program. The important thing, then, from the teacher's point of view, is the co-operative attack on the problem of standards. In organizing for this attack it will be well to bear in mind a few points which I shall discuss briefly.

First, standards must be developed in terms of a span of time. The Virginia course of study lists standards in language without naming any particular grade. Grade emphasis is suggested by means of a graph for each standard. The reason for this is that the skills and knowledges of English are, for the most part, a long time growing. They require to be planted, nurtured, and harvested rather than just to be planted. They do not grow like weeds. They grow like trees.

Second, standards must be set with respect to individual children. Earlier I used the terms "second grade," "tenth grade," and so on. These are useful terms only in the sense of my definition of the word "standard"; i.e. "a type, model, or example for comparison." If in stating your standards, grade divisions are indicated, it should be with the clear understanding that for some students the tenth grade standard is too high, for some, too low. One good way is to state standards for primary grades, for intermediate grades, for upper grades, for senior high and for college.

Third, standards must leave much to the interpretation of teacher and supervisor. We may use standard tests and scales and home-made tests and scales. We may collect pupil compositions and all that. For what? So that the teacher may say "This pupil uses good beginning sentences," or "This pupil can greet

visitors," or "This pupil appreciates Tennyson's lyric poetry." The time may come when standards may be set forth in terms of tests, or other more or less mechanical measures, but that time is not yet here.

Statement of objectives

How we shall state our standards, then, is important. Since our standard now will represent a statement, approved by all, of what represents good use, desirable knowledge or appreciation of English, we must work carefully on these stated standards, or objectives, as I have called them elsewhere.⁵

Our statement must not be too big, nor too little; it must, like Goldilock's chair, be just right. If statements are too big they mean too much. To say that a pupil should "write well" or that he should "appreciate literature," tells me too much. I am overwhelmed. To list on the other hand standards such as "eliminate *ain't*, and *be done*," goes too far. Again I am overwhelmed, but for a different reason. Now I know where to begin, but it is too small a beginning.

⁵ Milligan, John P. "The English Expression Program in the Bloomfield, New Jersey Public Schools." *Elementary English Review*, 15: 5-10. January, 1938.

In stating standards, or objectives, or aims or goals, I would propose that you keep in mind two fundamental criteria: (1) the statement should be related to, and should suggest activity; and (2) the statement should imply development of power. I can best and most simply illustrate by giving some examples which I consider appropriate for grades seven, eight and nine.

A. *His speech is free from all glaring errors.* This standard implies speaking on the pupil's part, and attention to his speech by teachers in all classes. It involves a real understanding and agreement on the part of the person as to what is an error and what isn't. This is a long story, and involves many arguments.

B. *He gives at least one talk a week.* This implies planning by the pupil and checking by the teacher. It implies co-operation among departments in the school.

C. *He can use quotation marks correctly.* This implies that the teacher will have seen the pupil using quotation marks in enough purposeful writing so that she can say this of the pupil.

D. *He enjoys reading novels like those of Stevenson.*

Improving English Usage

ELIZABETH GUILFOILE

Principal, Twelfth District School
Cincinnati, Ohio

THE SCHOOL is ceaselessly occupied with the specific abilities of the children in enunciation, pronunciation, choice and construction of words. These problems are constant, whatever may be the approach to the problems of thinking and expression.

Certain facts must be borne in mind in regard to the children's speech habits:

1. Good or poor speech is the product of the home, primarily, and of the community to a somewhat less degree.

2. The child's speech is largely a matter of habits well established by the time he comes to school.

3. Changing the speech of the child or of the group involves the establishment of attitudes. Improvement in English usage comes only with the desire of individuals to improve.

4. Desire to improve springs from social relationships within and without the school that challenge the child to acceptable forms of speech.

These considerations all point to the difficulty of bringing about improvement in English usage. Furthermore there are difficulties inherent in the fact that speech is primarily social expression.

We know that the school faces the danger of offending when it attempts to change the speech which is so essentially a part of the cultural pattern of the home and the community.

We know that the fluid character of language and the regional differences in speech make it impossible for standards to be absolutely fixed.

A popular writer says in a lay publication:

The only recognized authority for American pronunciation is not the dictionary, or the radio, or the pedagogues. The unimpeachable authority, one from which there is no appeal, is simply the speech of the educated people.¹

He was anticipated by an authority in the field of English education in a statement made in 1928:

The informal language of cultivated people, not the formal literary tone of books, is what we need most in our elementary schools.²

Dr. Leonard had made an extensive study to see whether authorities agreed as to the correctness or incorrectness of a large number of items such as "It is me." He found no agreement among specialists in English, and concluded that it was useless to spend too much time inveighing against expressions which were rapidly passing into current use.

A great deal about what not to do in the correction of the child's speech is common knowledge. Among the chief maxims are these:

1. Do not expose the child to the incorrect form.
2. Do not give written practice on correct forms. It does not carry over into oral usage.
3. Do not interrupt the child when he is speaking.
4. Do not destroy interest and enthusiasm by too much attention to the correction of form.

¹Lewis, Norman, *The Woman*, August, 1940.

²Leonard, S. A., "Old and New in Elementary Composition Teaching," *Progressive Education*, April, May, June, 1928.

5. Do not demand perfection of those who have great difficulties to overcome.
6. Do not make prigs of children by having them correct the language of their elders.
7. Do not nullify the social purposes of expression in school by having children correct each other's errors.

Teachers find that when a sound attitude toward improvement has been established, and a social spirit prevails in the class, these negatives may sometimes be set aside. They are better observed in the spirit than too literally.

In spite of the double difficulties of establishing what is correct and of changing both the neuro-muscular and the emotional patterns involved, the teacher who is keenly sensitive to the needs of her pupils in diction, who wishes to pass on to them her own appreciation of the beauty and facility of the English language, attempts to meet the situation.

Among good teachers in the elementary field the following practices seem to be generally accepted as obligations.

1. *Provide the correct standards*

In many instances the sole exposure of the school children to choice and pleasing speech is to that of the teacher. The teacher in this case should supplement her usual speech activities in the classroom by much reading aloud of superior material. If she tells stories well, and knows the best poetry and can speak it appreciatively, she adds greatly to her influence upon the speech of pupils.

Speakers should be brought into the classroom when this is possible. Local citizens with desirable standards of speech may be asked to give this service, speaking on any subject of interest and profit

to the children. Well chosen radio programs are available to schools that have the facilities. Battery sets may be used where electrical current is not available. Phonograph records are valuable also as illustrations of good diction.

In communities in which the cultural standards are relatively high, the teacher usually finds it necessary to work tactfully against specific local defects. With superior children whose language is reasonably free from gross errors, she has rich opportunities to develop original expression. She encourages extensive reading of the best literature, and calls attention to the most desirable radio programs. She creates opportunities for sensitive oral interpretation of literature and for simple, genuine experiences in dramatics. She seeks for the older elementary children of this group opportunities to hear the best actors and speakers.

The dull child, from the cultivated home, who speaks correctly when he speaks at all, may need little help in the mechanics of oral speech but much stimulation to expression.

As a means of expediting improvement in usage, the teacher, in any situation, should select for class attention those critical items which constitute a large part of the total errors. Determination of characteristic errors should be made on the basis of careful study. In many situations children at the intermediate grade level may study their own language consciously and select their group and individual problems in improvement.

Where there are errors in great numbers, certain items should be selected for attention. It is useless and unkind to burden a class or an individual with attention to a large number of forms. It results only in confusion, discouragement

and waste of effort. Some schools determine the errors to be eliminated in each grade. Each year the teacher checks carefully with the teacher who had the group the year before to see what has been stressed. She is not too deeply discouraged if she finds that the children often use incorrectly the forms which had been consistently taught.

The teacher does not ignore her own opportunity to present the acceptable form, and to remind children in their frequent lapses, but her correction is unobtrusive. In a small informal group she often substitutes the right word in a quiet voice while the child is talking. The child repeats it with no interruption to his thought and continues speaking.

2. *Create in the child the desire to use good English*

Establishing genuine situations that demand real communication and expression is a matter of setting up a vital school program. The class that has been organized into a social unit, that is doing real things, and is constantly challenged by new and interesting ideas, finds endless necessities to discuss, to plan, to report, to explain, to interview, to give directions, to ask questions, to read aloud a bit of pertinent information, or a selected story, to dramatize informally, to share favorite poems, to tell jokes or personal experiences, to preside over, or take part in, committee or larger group meetings.

These real needs for communication or expression demand of the child that he speak well and clearly so as to reach the attention of his listeners. It is in such situations that he is stimulated to a desire to slough off his inaccuracies and achieve higher speech standards.

3. *Lead him to recognize his own needs*

Habits of language are so nearly automatic that random practice directed by

the teacher at the general needs of the class can serve but a limited purpose. The child must know his own difficulties. In many situations the teacher keeps a card file of errors noted for each child and in personal conference helps him to recognize his needs. Standard tests or teacher-devised tests are useful up to a certain point in helping each individual discover his own errors.

4. *Supply practice under proper guidance*

Successful practice depends upon a clear understanding of what is to be practiced, and a driving urge to achieve the necessary proficiency. With the motive supplied by real needs for expression, with a spirit of helpfulness prevailing in the classroom, and with a sincere relationship existing between pupils and teacher, effective practice may be secured. For example, a kindergarten teacher, dealing with a very capable class, reported the following:

The children are alert to the fact that their teacher and their parents use the dictionary to determine whether words are "good words" or not. So when an expression such as *beck* or *darn* sounds to them questionable, we turn to the dictionary. Since, of course, we do not find them, we conclude they are not good words. When phrases such as *kin I* and *I seen* are questioned we turn to story books and read how the people who write stories say things.

Again, a seventh grade in a middle-class neighborhood was afflicted not only with the current local crudities but also with a very tenacious German idiom persisting to this, the third or fourth generation, including the characteristic upward lilt at the close of a statement.

Under the teacher's direction the group made a list of correct items needing practice. This included both individual errors and those common to the class. Then they wrote a number of sentences using

these crucial words and phrases. These sentences were organized into test and drill sheets which were used for individual and small group practice.

This material differed from the usual teacher-prepared or commercial practice sheets in that (1) it stressed the items that the children needed to learn; (2) the drill was focused at the point of recognized need; (3) it had unique value for the children because they had prepared it for themselves and each other.

Another instance is offered by a fourth-grade teacher who developed a type of practice based upon the same principle. This group of sadly underprivileged children had developed a keen desire to speak distinctly enough to take part in an assembly program. The teacher reports that at almost any time of day, small groups might have been found in odd corners of the room practicing.

Eloise and Hilda were repeating *who, which, where, when, why, whose, while*, in turn. The children in this group had never heard the *h* sound in these words before being made conscious of it in school. They had just learned the trick of reversing the first two consonants, and saying *hwich, hwile* etc.

Three small boys had lists of words such as *airdrome, cockpit, propeller*, which had grown out of their study of airplanes. They were working the muscles of tongues, jaw, and lips as they had been advised in pronouncing the words and were freely criticizing each others' performances.

A group of children around a table were searching books for words with special endings. One of them had invented a game. "Give me a word that ends in *ing*." (Or in *ed* or *ly*, as the case might be.)

Co-operative spirit in attack upon difficulties may result in group plans and individual plans. Miss Jenkins³ says:

When once a class need is discovered, the teacher should plan definitely such procedures as will meet the difficulty. No hard and fast rules can be stated as to how this shall be done. Often the class may suggest means of doing it; at other times the versatility of the teacher may suggest interesting procedures. The test is whether the method adopted appeals to the class, employs economical learning methods, and accomplishes satisfactory results.

She lists many procedures used to help meet specific needs.

5. *Enlist the co-operation of the home*

The school will of course cultivate the interest of the community in speech improvement. This is the more easy to do if the teacher is a real student of language and able to appreciate local color, and enjoy the tang of unaccustomed idiom.

Most communities will receive whatever is suggested for the good of their children if the approach of the school is one of friendly co-operation. One school launched a campaign for better speech by explaining the program to the Parent-Teachers' Association. Throughout the year brief follow-up bulletins were used. The items of usage receiving special attention at the time were stressed.

Many parents entered into the project whole-heartedly and joined the children in friendly compacts in the homes, by which parents and children checked on each other.

The sympathetic teacher of a sixth-grade had brought about a desire on the part of the class for better speech. This was a group of Negro children whose chief failing in school was inexpressiveness and who might have fallen silent if confronted with a complete picture of their inadequacy. They were encouraged by their teacher to try to substitute correct forms for certain glaring errors. A suggestion made by one child was followed

³ Jenkins, Frances. *Language Development in Elementary Grades*. Nelson, 1936. Pp. 197-207.

by several others. She printed neatly in vivid colors on light cardboard the following:

We were
I am not
It is his

"I'm going to take it home," she announced, "and hang it over the sink. I can practice saying those things while I wash the dishes."

6. *Fit the child with the means to help himself*

When once a sensitive ear to better language has been developed and a keen desire to improve has permeated a class, or a school, many means of sustaining interest are found. However, improvement in usage remains a highly individual matter. Reiteration of right forms, the contagion of good example, and the spur of the friendly concern of one's peers are very important, but the child also must have means of helping himself.

a. Development of the language principle involved is of course important so far as this is possible, but the limitations of a given group must always be recognized. Grammatical construction is a help only so far as the children are able to comprehend it. Many primary children are interested to learn why "He doesn't" is correct and "He don't" is incorrect. But it is useless to spend time in explanations of the error in such expressions as *git*, *his'n*, and *I went by my aunt's house*. It is better to point out simply and often that people say *get*, *his*, and *I went to my aunt's house*.

b. Children may be encouraged to keep cards or notebooks of correct items related to their individual difficulties for reference.

c. They may be taught how to use references, the dictionary, simple gram-

mars, and helpful language texts. An especially valuable aid to intermediate grade children is the *Handbook of English for Boys and Girls* published by the National Conference on Research in English.

d. The room should be supplied with a card file, indexed book, or chart, showing the correct forms with which the class is concerned at a given time.

Attitude of the school

When correct standards have been provided, when pupils have been inspired with desire to achieve those standards, and have been given consistent guidance and the means of self-help, it still remains for the school to adopt an attitude of unfailing optimism and enthusiasm for the task of improving the prevailing speech habits. Neither the carping plaint of the precisionist nor the humorous despair of the defeatist will solve the situation. The things that do help are:

a. Persistence in building a school program that calls for much informal speech on the part of the children.

b. Consistent effort to establish sound social relationships that permit of co-operative attack on language problems.

c. Unfailing recognition of the small gains made by individuals, and by the whole group, in the attainment of the goals they have set for themselves.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

National Council of Teachers of English. *An Experience Curriculum in English*. D. Appleton-Century, 1935: "Corrective Teaching: Usage," Ch. 18.

Jenkins, Frances. *Language Development in the Elementary Grades*. Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936. "Schoolroom Situations and How They Were Met," pp. 181-196.

Ragland, Fannie J. (Chairman of committee). *A Proposed Guide for English, grades 4, 5, 6*. Cincinnati Public Schools, 1939. "Correct Usage," pp. 110-113.

A Greater Independence in Written Expression

PHILA HUMPHREYS

*Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Public Schools, Manitowoc, Wisconsin*

A LONG WITH the program to enrich and widen the scope of a child's writing through emphasis upon experiences in science, social studies, nature and the arts should go a program that insures an ever increasing independence in written expression. Informal observations of the work done in the Manitowoc Public Schools seem to indicate many centers of interest and the use of a wide variety of ideas. However, the extent to which the children have been observed copying teacher-corrected compositions into note books makes one wonder whether or not an adequate resourcefulness in writing is truly being developed. Are the pupils growing in their ability to recognize and appreciate good composition quality? Do they evidence a desire to make a finished product representative of their best work? Are they able to set up and use guides for evaluating their own work? If not, how can they be helped to do this?

In order to get a more adequate picture of the status of ability in written expression, a survey was made in May, 1940, in which about 600 pupils in grades four, five, and six were asked to contribute as suggested in the following note:

We are interested in making a collection of samples of written expression. Will you help by sending in a sample of yours? It may be any one of the following things: a personal experience, a poem, a summary of something you have learned in science or social science, a letter—business or friendly, a set of directions for making something or how to play a game, an out-

line for a talk, an invitation, a notice for the bulletin board, a news item, a riddle, an advertisement.

If you like, you may paste in a sample of something you have already written. Otherwise, write on this paper. You may use pencil.

Pupils were then asked to list the things they considered important when checking a paper to make sure it was their best work, and a rating in general achievement, oral expression, penmanship, spelling, and vocabulary was forwarded with each sample.

A score card adapted from the Hillegas Scale was used to analyze the quality of the compositions. It had five steps which were characterized as: first—difficult to decipher; second—sentences loosely joined; third—well organized but lacks interesting detail; fourth—interesting content but needs revision; and fifth—exceptional content and quality.

Almost 25 per cent of the pupils selected a finished draft to represent their written expression. The greatest number of these were contributed by the pupils in the fifth grade and the least by the pupils in the sixth. For the most part these compositions were well written and their selection showed an evidence of ability to recognize and appreciate good quality. Teachers who see to it that adequate recognition is given for work well done and provision made for safe keeping, set a standard of appreciation that is certain to carry over to the pupils.

A detailed analysis of the quality of

the content of the largest group of compositions, namely, personal experience stories, showed a total of 11 per cent of the compositions as being of exceptional content and quality. All of the pupils writing these compositions were ranked average or above by the teachers in general achievement, oral expression, penmanship, spelling and vocabulary development except one pupil in the sixth grade who was ranked below average in penmanship and spelling. Although the letter formation was not good, his composition was legible. Five per cent of the compositions were difficult to read, mainly because of penmanship quality. One on the sixth grade level when deciphered proved to be interesting and showed ability to tell a good story. It impressed the writer with the importance of insisting upon good quality in handwriting from the beginning. The composition follows:

One day as I was walking through a cool balmy woods I saw a flash, a thunderous explosion and all was silent. As I hurried forward I smelt smoke. Then I remembered something. It was the Fourth of July and people were setting off firecrackers. So I planned to rest a while. Suddenly I thought! The X38, the new army bomber should be here. Also the great test pilot Warren Long. Then, I broke into a fast sprint. Ahead of me I saw a plane. I saw the letters X38 on a foreric of the wing. Into the smouldering flames I ran. I saw the pilot's body. I listened and to my joy he was still living. I got the rocket firecracker I had and threw it into the air. That was the signal for help to my comrades. When they broke through I fainted from the smoke. When I woke up in the hospital Warren Long was in the bed next to mine. Again I fell asleep.

Thirty-eight per cent of the compositions were loosely joined together or lacked interesting detail. Those on the fourth grade level showed greatest need for smoother transitions, which was to be expected. However, the fact that 17

of the children were rated above average in general achievement and 41 at least average or above in oral expression would lead one to believe that a number of these children were not achieving up to their ability in written expression. The following paragraph, for instance, was written by a fourth grade pupil who was rated above average in everything except penmanship.

A HIKE

Saturday I went on a hike. I picked some flowers and put them in a bag. I dropped some big stones in the river. After awhile I found a fish pole. I went by the river and looked for fish. I found a dead on and took him out. I carried him and threw him back in. I walked under a brige and found a oil can that was a float. It started to rain. I started back home.

A most challenging group to the teacher includes the children whose compositions contained interesting content but needed some revision. Twenty-three of these pupils were rated above average in all phases of expression checked. It is also significant to note that eight, nine, and seventeen of these cases were rated below average respectively in general achievement, penmanship, and spelling. Apparently many of them have good ideas but need help in mechanics of expression.

That the children lacked a practical understanding of guides to use in revising their compositions is shown by the fact that more than 25 per cent of the check lists made by the pupils included such general statements as "follow rules," "good English," "good paragraphs," "expression," "interesting," and "my best work." Six per cent of the pupils did not respond at all. That there was very little agreement was evidenced by the fact that capital letters and periods were the only two items listed as checked by as many as 44 per cent of the pupils. Thirty-eight per cent said they checked for spelling

errors; 20 per cent said they checked sentences for interesting words and completeness. General organization was referred to by a few pupils by such statements as "makes sense" and "stick to point."

Further evidence of inability to make a careful revision on the part of many pupils was shown by a practical experience in revision of compositions in which 121 sixth graders participated voluntarily. A study of the first and second drafts showed some improvement in 53 per cent, much improvement in 33 per cent but no improvement in 13 per cent of the compositions. The finished drafts showed spelling and punctuation errors in 57 and 42 per cent of the stories respectively, and some form of word error was found in 25 per cent of the compositions. Forty per cent of the finished drafts were loosely joined and lacked interesting detail. However, it was interesting to note what one conscientious child, for instance, did in the way of revising the first draft without teacher help.

MY SURPRISE

(First draft)

One very hot day, I was trying to figure out what would be the coolest place. I finally decided on the apple tree. I started climbing it. After I got up I found it wasn't so cool. What a predicament I was in, I could not get down. After a terrific struggle I finally succeeded but only with a rip in my pants. I dashed in the house and to my surprise it was cool in the house. Never again will I climb trees to escape the heat.

(Second draft)

One very hot July day, I was trying to figure out where the coolest place might be. I finally decided on the apple tree in the back yard. I started to climb it, but after I got up I found it was not so cool. What a predicament I was in, I could not get down and it seemed just about the hottest place in the world. After a terrific struggle I succeeded in getting down but only with

a rip in my pants. I ran in house and to my great surprise it was cool. I have learned my lesson: that there are cooler places than the branches in trees.

He added some good detail, made a smoother transition and improved the ending. However, there was an increase in both spelling and punctuation errors. It would have been interesting to know just what he would have done if his attention had been called to the fact that there were several spelling errors. Could he have found and corrected them himself?

The results of the survey were presented at a teacher's meeting in September, 1940, and it was agreed to concentrate during the year upon developing pupil ability to improve compositions. The program was to include provision for such abilities as the setting up of guides for checking that were within the ability of the various groups, conferences with pupils, and training in specific skills. It was recommended that pupils' compositions be analyzed frequently for assimilative activities within pupil interest and ability, and examples filed ready for use under such headings as run-on sentences, verb errors, the use of capital letters, punctuation, good titles, interesting beginning sentences, good choice of words, and so on. However, the importance of encouraging pupils to write the first draft freely in order to develop fluency of expression was emphasized.

In April, 1941, the writer analyzed another set of compositions obtained by asking the same group of teachers to send in a first and finished draft of some representative phase of written expression for each child in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade.

The content of these compositions was again typical of pupil interest. Some of it was related to the science and social

science fields and showed some ability to express in child language information found in books. However, most of it was based upon real and imaginary personal experiences. Pets, sports, holidays, school activities, dreams, scares, accidents, interesting places and events were popular topics.

An analysis of the quality of the content of the final draft of a representative group, namely, fifteen from each class, showed considerable improvement. Fewer compositions were characterized as difficult to decipher or composed of "run-on or loosely joined sentences" in both the fifth and sixth grades. There was an increase of 34 per cent in the number of compositions classified as well organized, but lacking in interesting detail, and again an appreciable decrease on the fourth and fifth grade levels in compositions characterized as interesting in content but needing some revision.

The greatest increase in compositions classified as exceptional in content and quality occurred in grade four. Six of these were written by pupils classified as only average in general ability. It is significant to note, too, that while none of the compositions written by pupils ranked as below average in general ability received the highest rating on the score card, several in each grade were classified on level four (interesting content but needs some revision). Forty-nine per cent of the compositions were classified on level three (well organized but lacking in interesting detail). Many of these were written by pupils ranked as superior in general achievement. Some of their compositions were no more interesting than those written by the pupils ranked as below average in general ability. It was encouraging to note the greater number of compositions classified as mechanically correct. However, teach-

ers must recognize the need for helping pupils enrich their written expression. They must not be satisfied to accept a story as a pupil's best work just because it is correct in form. Children who have a good sense of mechanics should be stimulated to be on the alert for interesting detail.

Excellent samples of how pupil growth was stimulated were found in the report of a sixth grade teacher. She said,

My suggestions for improvement were written on the first paper. I called attention to misspelled words which I thought the children could sound out themselves, by underlining. I also gave some general suggestions, orally, such as "Tell more about how you feel or what you think. Express your own opinion where you can. Try to use at least two better words somewhere in your story." I also spelled difficult words for them, but not words I thought they could sound. I helped them sound out some of these.

Eleven of the children decided to use a "scribble sheet" when rewriting their stories.

Suggestions written by this teacher on the first drafts included such comments as:

What does the last paragraph have to do with the first? Make clear why you are including this paragraph in this story.

Be sure each paragraph tells enough about one thing to be interesting. Tell more about one thing.

The title could be more definite.

You are using apostrophes where you do not need them.

Find where you left out a period.

What word should you use instead of mad?

Can you find the sentence that doesn't belong in the story?

Try sounding the underlined words.

What word did you use too often?

Your ending sentence is weak.

Does this vocabulary suggest any ideas to you?—martial, stirring, patriotic, sacred, lullaby, folk song, merry, lively.

Here is the first draft of a below average pupil in her grade:

THE LIBRARY

Our library in school is very nice. Whave a large poster above our library. Our librarian is very nice. We have little illas-trations in our library so know you see why I think our library is very nice.

Teacher suggestions:

What word did you use too often?

Can't you get in two or three more ideas?

How do we use the library?

Your ending sentence is weak.

Note the extent to which this "below average" pupil has made use of the teacher's suggestions in writing the second draft.

THE LIBRARY

Our library in school is very helpful to many children. If you have extra time in school you can always take out a good library book. Our librarian helps us find good books. We have little illas-trations of books in our library too. Every day a different grade goes into the library for a little while. We have our library priod on Friday. When we have topics Miss Ottelien picks out some people to go in the library and work. We made some posters in school and put them in the library. I hope that there will always be a library in this school.

Some of the compositions were checked by pupils only, others by teachers only, and some by both pupils and teachers. Teacher corrections only were made for three out of seven sets of compositions in grade four, four in grade five, and one in grade six respectively. As has been suggested, in those cases where pupils were encouraged to do their own revising, there was considerable evidence of resourcefulness.

Errors found that had a total frequency of 10 per cent or more were spelling, choice of words, penmanship, capital letters, addition of detail, verb forms and paragraph form. A number of pupils did nothing more in the revision than to try to improve the handwriting. However, spelling errors were found and corrected on more than half of the papers. The teachers did most of the checking of in-

correct use of capital letters, paragraphing and verb form. Difficulties in the use of capital letters were checked most frequently in grades four and five and involved the beginnings of sentences, titles, proper names and over use. Suggestions for improving paragraph form involved indenting the first line, margins, and leaving a space between the title and first line. On the whole, the paragraph form was good.

About 25 per cent of the pupils tried and did some very good work in adding or substituting more meaniful words on all grade levels as is indicated in the following examples:

Grade 5

Below average pupil:

Original sentence: When I got to the place I was staying I was glad.

Improved sentence: When I got to my hotel I was glad.

Average pupil:

Original sentence: One day I had gone to school and when I got home from school my chickens were nowhere to be seen.

Improved sentence: One day when I got home from school my chickens were nowhere to be seen.

Grade 6

Average pupil:

Original sentence: We heard the airplane motors far above.

Improved sentence: We heard the humming of airplane motors far above.

Above average pupil:

Original sentence: My hobbie is pigeons.

Improved sentence: My hobby is raising pigeons.

There was evidence, too, of ability on the part of the pupils to improve fragmentary and run-on sentences, particularly in the sixth grade.

Below average pupil:

Original sentence: Fog was coming it covered the city like a blanket cover a bed.

Improved sentence: Fog was coming and it covered the city like a blanket covering a bed.

Average pupil:

Original sentence: Then I drowsily open-

ed my eyes and I saw that I had beat George to the house but I was still on the ground.

Improved sentence: Then I drowsily opened my eyes and I saw that I had beat George to the house. I was lying exhausted on the ground.

Above average pupil:

Original sentence: Seals, stars and circles on different kinds of charts but the particular one I am going to write about is our Reading Chart.

Improved sentence: Seals, stars and circles on different kinds of charts show our ability to finish things. The particular one I am going to write about is our Reading Chart.

Titles, beginning sentences, ending sentences and order of words and ideas were given a minimum of attention. The examples of efforts to improve titles below were taken from the papers of average and below average pupils in the sixth grade. Again, they are good illustrations of what children can do when properly encouraged.

Original title: Fog in London.

Improved title: Fog Over London.

Original title: An Astonishing Trick.

Improved title: An Astonishing Revenge.

Original title: A Surprise.

Improved title: A Mischievous Pup.

The following beginning sentences were written by sixth graders classified as above average in general achievement. Note the contrast in appeal. In each instance, both pupils were reporting on the same event.

Sweet strains of tinkling music broke forth from Mr. Jannusch's room.

On Friday, April 25, 1941, Mrs. Randolph brought a music box to the sixth grade.

The McKinley School baseball team bagged its third straight victory, Friday.

McKinley has just played Woodrow Wilson Junior High School and won.

As has been suggested, the compositions showed a good sequence of ideas for the most part. However, according to the illustrations below, there was evidence of need for more help in arranging the order of words in sentences. Are we paying enough attention to the dialectical difficulties of our pupils?

Was I lucky it was only a dream.

Some of the men take nets with them or a pole.

I went out in the country with George to his sister's house.

Tricks carried some by his teeth.

They didn't get many suckers but they had mostly smelt.

She said I should wait a while and then we would go.

In summary, then, it is significant that less attention was given in all of the grades to improving paragraph form, capital letters, periods, commas, sentence structure and titles than pupil check lists, May, 1940, pointed out. The things that the pupils did most in actual practice in May, 1941, namely, adding detail and substituting better words, were seldom mentioned in the check lists last year. It is quite possible that the guides set up are still too frequently not within the understanding of the pupils who try to use them. On the other there is evidence to show that the bright pupils are not stimulated to do their best work.

A general survey will not be made in 1942. However, teachers will be encouraged to send in descriptions of specific teaching situations and examples to show development in independence. These will be compiled in the summer for local use.

Opportunity to Develop Skill in Communicating Ideas

ANNIE M. McCOWEN

Colorado State College of Education, Greeley

IN COMMUNICATING ideas to others the chief means employed is language. For this reason, there is probably no other school subject that contributes more to the needs of boys and girls, both in school and out of school, than does language. To be unable to speak and write one's ideas clearly and correctly is a handicap indeed and one to which severe social penalties are attached. No school can afford to neglect its language program on any grade level. It is of the utmost importance that every teacher, especially every teacher of English, consider carefully the most efficient ways of teaching pupils to use the English language effectively in speaking and in writing.

To provide ample opportunities for every child to develop skill in communicating ideas is not simple task for a teacher. In communicating ideas through the use of language a regular hierarchy of skills is involved. To illustrate the complexity of the task, I have listed some of the abilities that are needed by intermediate grade children in one important language activity, writing friendly letters.

One group of abilities is concerned with choosing ideas to write about. To know what to tell in a letter each pupil needs, among other things, the ability:

1. To select from among recent happenings those that the person to whom he is writing is most interested in hearing about.

2. To give enough detail about each happening selected to make his letter fun to read.

3. To express his opinions about some of the happenings.

4. To avoid trite expressions.

5. To make appropriate remarks in letters of thanks, of congratulation, and of condolence.

A second group of abilities is necessary if the writer is to make his meaning clear. To express his ideas with clearness and exactness, each pupil needs the ability:

6. To know what a sentence is and to realize it when he has used a group of words that is not a sentence.

7. To keep his sentences apart.

8. To arrange the parts of a sentence so as to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

9. To use exact words instead of vague ones in expressing his ideas.

10. To choose the best words to express the meaning he has in mind.

11. To use the dictionary to check the meaning of a doubtful word.

12. To explain the meaning of any words that might not be understood by his correspondent.

13. To make clear the antecedent of every pronoun used.

14. To use punctuation marks to make his meaning clear.

A third group of abilities is needed for the pupil to present his ideas in a forceful and interesting manner. To organize his ideas effectively each pupil needs the ability:

* Read before the Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English, at Atlanta, Georgia, November 22, 1941. This is Part I of discussion of the general topic, "The Implications of the Defense of American Tradition to the Teacher of English in the Elementary School."

15. To keep to one topic until he has finished it before beginning another.

16. To tell things in the right order.

17. To avoid needless repetitions of ideas.

18. To combine two or more short, choppy sentences into one sentence.

19. To use variety in sentence form as a means of making paragraphs more interesting to read.

20. To develop a center of interest in a letter.

21. To arrange paragraphs in an interesting and logical order.

A *fourth* group of abilities is needed if the pupil is to write his letters correctly as judged by the standards of cultured persons; therefore, he needs to be able:

22. To arrange the parts of a letter correctly on the page.

23. To use words such as *saw* and *seen*, *did* and *done*, *he* and *I* and *him* and *me* correctly.

24. To punctuate each part of the letter correctly.

25. To use capital letters where they are needed and only where they are needed.

26. To begin new paragraphs in the right places and in the correct manner.

27. To address and stamp envelopes properly.

To meet the social amenities, still a *fifth* group of abilities must be added. A pupil needs the ability:

28. To answer important letters promptly.

29. To answer the questions that have been asked by the person to whom he is writing.

30. To select stationery which is appropriate and in good taste.

31. To decide to whom he should write thank-you letters, letters of con-

gratulation and of condolence, and when he should write them.

32. To refrain from reading a letter which belongs to another person.

33. To mail his letters promptly.

A comparable list could be made for writing business letters, for making reports, for taking part in discussions, for conversations, for telling stories, and for all other important language activities. Of course many abilities would be common to several lists, some to all of them, but aside from these repetitions there would remain a formidable array of language abilities to be taught.

What provisions should the school make for helping pupils develop the hierarchy of skills they need in communicating ideas? Because language functions in every lesson, some schools have made no provision for a definite language program. No language period is included in the daily schedule. In some of these schools the only chance that pupils have to acquire any of these basic language abilities is that of merely being given the opportunity and the time to talk or write as the need for talking or writing arises in connection with some other school subject. If, for example, in some activity in social studies, opportunities arise in which reports need to be made orally or in writing, pupils give reports or write them. The problem of teaching pupils how to prepare and give a good report is never attacked directly. This incidental plan of teaching language assumes that one learns to talk and write correctly and effectively merely by practice in talking and writing. If this assumption were true, all of us would speak and write much better than we do.

Other schools in which language is taught only in connection with other school subjects provide for the definite

teaching of some language skills as the need for them arises. For example, when pupils need to write a business letter in connection with a project in science, time is taken during the science period for the teaching of the correct form of a business letter. Some science teachers may even give additional instruction about the content of such a letter. While this second plan of incidental teaching is unquestionably more effective than the first, it is certainly not adequate for teaching all of the language skills that pupils need in communicating ideas.

In my opinion, any plan of teaching language which is limited to the needs of language in other school subjects is certain to result in only partial learning of the language skills needed in life. It is doubtful that enough time for teaching language can be taken from any other school subject without interfering seriously with the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of that subject. To stop pupils in the middle of a social studies project in order to teach the language skills needed in letter writing, for example, is to sidetrack their interest and their progress in the solution of social studies problems. Such a plan is bound to result not only in the partial teaching of language, but in a loss of interest and achievement in other school subjects as well. Even under skillful teachers it is practically impossible to provide for instruction in some of the most important language requirements of modern life when all of the language teaching must grow out of needs which arise in connection with other subjects. It is quite possible that important skills necessary to the writing of good social letters to intimate friends or relatives, or to the improvement of conversation may not be needed in connection with any school subject during a whole year, yet

these skills are of the utmost importance in life. Throughout a lifetime, conversation is unquestionably the most used oral language activity and the writing of social letters the most commonly used written one. To teach only the language skills that are needed in connection with some other school subject is bound to result in limiting seriously the child's opportunities to develop proficiency in communicating ideas.

It is also my opinion that any plan of teaching language which is governed entirely by the language requirements of other school subjects is likely to lead to fragmentary and confused learning. The teaching is bound to lack the close organization that can be so helpful to pupils in seeing the relationship among important language skills. Each of the common language activities of life such as conversations, discussions, letter writing, making reports, or story telling includes some skills that are peculiar to that activity. In addition there are groups of skills such as those needed in speech that are common to all oral language and other groups such as those needed in capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing that function only in written language. More important still are groups of skills such as those that have to do with the correct usage of words and the development of sentence sense that are essential to all language activities whether oral or written. The specific skills in each of these groups are so necessary to the achievement of proficiency in so many different language activities that they must all be taught. Because of the large number of them, they must perforce be taught a few at a time. Furthermore, the order in which they are taught is important. They must be taught in proper sequence to be understood well enough to function in the many and varied language activities

in which the child needs to use them. This is particularly true in the development of sentence sense. If this important group of skills is taught in haphazard fashion as the need arises in connection with other subjects, the child might never acquire control of that most basic of all language tools—the sentence. It is not at all uncommon to find boys and girls of college age who have talked for at least sixteen years and written for ten, still unable to speak or write in well-constructed sentences. What is worse, they are so lacking in the basic knowledge of sentence structure that they are unable to understand the nature of their own errors or to profit much by further practice or even by the instruction given them in classes in composition. No, the school is not meeting its full responsibility in helping pupils to develop skill in communicating ideas when it merely provides opportunities for them to talk and write. Nor is it doing this job even when it teaches language only if and when the need for it arises in some other school subject.

In view of the inadequacies of incidental teaching I heartily recommend a daily language period in each grade. It is certainly not my idea that language skills should be taught more or less in isolation. The language which is taught in this period must be functional and meaningful to pupils. This daily period should in no way replace the legitimate use of language in connection with all other school subjects. Most of what is taught there can and should also be used in all other school work as appropriate opportunities to do so arise. It is my opinion that this separate daily language period should form the backbone of the language program. In it, each of the important language activities should be taught, a few related skills at a time in

proper sequence. I do not mean to imply that all of the language skills that have to do with a given activity, with writing letters for example, should be taught at one time in one grade. I mean instead that there should be a unit's work of four or five lessons on letter writing during which time a series of related skills needed in letter writing should be concentrated upon before introducing work in some other language activity such as reports. A series of lessons on still another activity, such as on how to conduct discussions, might well follow the unit on reports, and so on until a direct attack has been made on all of the language activities that children of that grade level need in school and out of school.

Let me illustrate what I think might be accomplished in the daily language program by describing briefly a series of lessons that might well comprise one unit on how to prepare and give reports.

In order to make a good report, one must select a topic, collect information on that topic, organize that information, and present it to a group, either orally or in writing, or perhaps in both ways.

Obviously, all of the skills connected with such a complex language activity should be spread over several years' work. I shall confine my illustration to an introductory unit on the fifth-grade level in which only oral reports are made on material that does not necessarily involve reading to gather the necessary information.

Lesson one should, of course, be an introductory one. Its aim should be to make the pupils conscious of what a report is and how it differs from other language activities which they have studied, for example, story telling. It should also make the pupils conscious of the need for learning how to make good

reports and of how this knowledge will be of value to them in other school subjects and in life outside of school. To accomplish this aim, I suggest an oral discussion somewhat as follows: "You have heard your parents, your teachers, and your schoolmates talk about making reports. What is a report? How is making reports different from telling a story?" As a result of this discussion, the points should be clearly brought out that the main purpose of a story is usually enjoyment or pleasure to one's audience, whereas the main purpose of a report is to give one's audience information which they ought to know or in which they are interested. In a story accuracy is not extremely important. Some stories are better for exaggerating the point a little bit. In a report, on the other hand, accuracy is of the utmost importance. In a story there should be a surprise or something funny or exciting told. This is not necessary in most reports. Any good language lesson, should, I think, include whenever possible something concrete and definite for pupils to do to show that they have or have not understood the points developed in the lesson. To clinch the points in this lesson, pupils might be given several short paragraphs to read, some of them definitely story material and other reports. All of the paragraphs might well be about the same general topic as, for example, about "bears." One paragraph might deal with the topic "Fooled by a Bear Cub," another with "How Bears Live during the Winter," a third "Frightened by a Bear," a fourth, "Kinds of Bears That Are Native to the United States," etc. Children should then write the word *report* by those paragraphs that are reports and the word *story* by those that are stories and then defend their choices in a brief oral discussion. An appropriate closing for this lesson

would be a discussion of why each boy and girl should learn to prepare and give reports.

Lesson two might well begin with a class discussion of standards that this class could set up to help the boys and girls in it choose suitable topics for reports. This discussion should bring out the following points: select a topic which you know about or can find out enough about to make a good report; select something you are interested in; select something the audience would like to know more about; select a topic that is not too broad, one you can tell enough about to make it interesting in the time that you have. Follow this discussion by having each child check a list of topics that he thinks would be appropriate for him to use in making a report. Following each topic that he did not check, have him write a sentence explaining why he did not consider it a suitable topic for a report. The following suggested list includes many topics that are appropriate and a few that violate each of the standards which class has set up:

1. What Causes Frost
2. An Illness I Had
3. How to Make a Television Set
4. The Products of Africa
5. How Diamonds Are Mined in Africa
6. A Dream I Had Last Night
7. How to Prevent Electrical Storms
8. How Rice Is Grown
9. The Fishing Industry
10. What the First Automobile Was Like

In a third lesson the problem of how to tell things in the right order might be considered. Such a lesson could begin with a discussion of what is the right order for most reports. For the average child, this would be the order in which things happen or the order in which things should be done. This discussion could be followed by an exercise in which each child is given a copy of a report of

one or two paragraphs on some such topic as "How Pineapples Are Planted in Hawaii." He might then be told that some of the sentences are not in the correct order and that he is to rewrite the report and tell things in the order in which they should be told.

A fourth lesson could deal with the importance of sticking to the topic in making a report. In this lesson pupils should discuss why it is important to make every sentence in a report tell something different about the topic of the report. In this way pupils should realize that sentences that tell about something else distract the attention of the listener. Sentences that repeat what has already been said bore the audience and slow up the report. This discussion might well be followed by exercises in which a few brief reports containing sentences that are not on the topic and some sentences that repeat what has already been said are given to the pupils. The pupils should be directed to draw a line through each sentence that should be omitted from the report and then reread the report to discover how much better it sounds. They might then be instructed to copy the report, omitting all unnecessary sentences.

The fifth lesson might well be a culminating activity in which each pupil selects an appropriate topic about how something is made or done, such as how to pop corn, make fudge, lay out a baseball diamond, spade a garden, grow watermelons, fry bacon over a camp fire, etc. Each pupil should then plan a report on the topic he has chosen, perhaps writing a brief outline of it. He should be warned to take great care to tell things in the right order, to stick to his topic, and to avoid repeating ideas. After giving his report before the class, he should criticize his own report in terms of the three points about making reports that he has

learned in the unit. His classmates and his teacher should be expected to give him constructive criticisms, too.

After a week's work of the type described, wouldn't your pupils know more about making good reports than they would know if they had merely given five reports to the class? Wouldn't they be better able to set up standards by which to evaluate their own reports in the future?

The daily language period carries only the backbone of the language program. In addition, each teacher must take advantage of the natural opportunities for the teaching of language as they arise in connection with other work. As soon as possible after such a unit as I have described has been taught, it is advisable to have children make reports in connection with some other school subject such as social studies. These reports should again be evaluated by the pupils and the teacher in terms of what the class has learned in the language period about preparing and giving reports. This further practice and practical application of what they have learned in the language period should enable pupils to develop skill rapidly in communicating ideas through making reports, at least.

In summarizing, I want to emphasize the following points.

1. In view of the importance of speaking and writing in life, it is the obligation of the school to see that every child has the best opportunities that the school can give him to develop skill in communicating his ideas through the use of language.

2. The child needs a regular hierarchy of skills to be able to use the English language correctly and effectively. A list of some of the abilities needed by intermediate grade pupils in writing friendly letters illustrates the complexity of the

An Intimate Glimpse of Grammar

LOUIS FOLEY

Western Michigan College
Kalamazoo

APPARENTLY a good many people, including unfortunately some teachers, think of "grammar" as a collection of text-book rules. Such a notion is very unrealistic. The study of simple examples from living language can show us rather what sort of thing grammar really is.

Language is not simply a vast collection of names for things. More especially, it is a *system*. It includes the various methods which the human race has worked out for putting ideas into relationship with each other. These are not merely means of expression; they are ways of thinking.

Every language has its own peculiar ways of changing the forms of words to express variations of meaning, or to show different kinds of relationship with other words in a sentence. Taken together, these methods amount to a system which is characteristic of the language to which it belongs. To be sure, the rules are not applied with absolute uniformity, but they nevertheless represent customs so thoroughly established that their observance becomes practically instinctive. The exceptions, moreover, can nearly always be quite reasonably explained; often they are rare survivals of old speech-ways which have otherwise disappeared.

Thus for English-speaking people the natural way of changing a noun from singular to plural is by adding *-s* to it, or *-es* if the word already happens to end in *-s*. Vestiges of other methods which were once in vogue still appear in such plurals as *men*, *feet*, or *children*, as well as in

deer or *sheep*. In very simple and familiar terms like these, old styles could subsist after they had ceased to be used regularly, as they had formerly been, for whole classes of words. The strength of our modern feeling that *-s* is the proper ending for a plural is indicated by the tendency of uninformed people to add it to some words, already plural in meaning, which do not happen to end in *-s*. So we occasionally hear such illogical formations as "datas" or "this data," and the same phenomenon has produced our colloquial word "folks," whereas *folk* already means *people*.

Another detail which shows the force of custom in language is the *-ly* with which we habitually end our adverbs. By adding this syllable to an adjective, we produce an adverb, and the process seems as thoroughly natural as the adding of *-s* to a noun to make it plural, or of *-ed* to a verb to make it express action in the past. This feeling which we have for *-ly* as the normal ending for *adverbs* is an interesting development, in view of the fact that it was once quite as definitely thought of as an *adjective* ending. It is a softened form of the old Anglo-Saxon ending *-lic*, pronounced *leek*. Originally an independent word, *lic* meant "body" or "form." So, as a termination, it signifies "having the form of," or "like," whatever was represented by the noun to which it was added. From this meaning, in which the sense of the separate word *lic* is still apparent, it was extended to include other sorts of connections. This shifting of relationship can be observed among the

adjectives in *-ly* which we still employ. While *manly*, *womanly*, *saintly*, and *cowardly*, for instance, indicate that the persons to whom they are applied are "like" a man (i.e. a good or admirable man), a woman, a saint, or a coward, in such words as *earthly*, *bodily*, *daily*, or *monthly* the object modified is understood to be merely "of" or "belonging to" the earth, the body, the day, or the month.

In Anglo-Saxon, for the kind of expression which we think of as adverbial, the adjective ending *-lic* became *-lice*, the case-ending *e* being treated as a syllable. So the old word *manlice* may be translated by the phrase "in a manly way." Along with various other case-endings, this final *e* which marked the adverbial construction was lost in the general decline or simplification of the older language. As the suffix dwindled to *-li* or *-ly*, the distinction in form which had shown the difference of meaning between *-lic* and *-lice* was obliterated. Since then the *-ly* ending has seemed somehow to find its principal function as the sign of an *adverb*. A fair number of *adjectives* in *-ly* remain with us; they may be considered as relics of the former usage, analogous to the irregular plurals of nouns which still bear record of a time when plurals were commonly formed otherwise than by adding *s*. When we have occasion to make new *adjectives* now, however, the suffix which we naturally add is not *-ly* but *-like*.

Yet not all of our adverbs end in *-ly*, and, from a historical point of view, it seems reasonable to expect that not all of them should do so. The "flat" adverbs, as they are sometimes called,—those which do not have the *-ly* ending—may remind us once more of irregular plurals, and of *adjectives* in *-ly*, in that these also are relics of a now forgotten system. As appeared clearly in our example of *man-*

lice, what made it an adverb in Anglo-Saxon was the ending *e*. But this ending was commonly added in Old English to adjectives which did not end in *-lic*, and it made them just as truly adverbial as the others. The adjective *hat*, for instance (our *hot*) had for its corresponding adverb *hate*. With the general dropping off of unstressed final *e*'s, both adjective and adverb came to have the same form *hot*, and so we find them in Shakespeare. The fact that the adverbial form of this word is now very definitely established as *hotly*,¹ shows how the feeling for *-ly* as the sign of the *adverb* has gained in strength since Elizabethan times.

The case of *hotly* is typical of many others. When a method of inflection becomes the prevailing one, it spreads easily to words which in the beginning were handled quite differently. A number of verbs which in Old English changed the vowel, like *sing*, *sang*, *sung*, or *drive*, *drove*, *driven*, now keep their vowels unchanged and express the past tense by *-ed* like the great majority of our verbs. The tendency of young children to use verb-forms like *buyed* or *seed* or *goed* gives a hint as to how far this development might extend if it were left to take its course unchecked, and children who have any feeling *at all* for *-ly* as the adverbial sign are likely to create an occasional *-ly* adverb not to be found in the dictionary. Of course they do not need to know the term "adverb" in order to *feel* the relationship.

Now, in view of the way in which so many adverbs formerly "flat" have long since acquired the *-ly* ending, one is led to wonder how it happened that *some* of the uninflected forms should nevertheless survive, as they still do. The truth seems to be that these exceptions would not

¹ G. L. Kittredge and F. E. Farley, *An Advanced English Grammar*, p. 85. Ginn, 1913.

have remained as they are, had there not been some positive reason to prevent each one of them from joining the larger group which had become regular. In some cases the reason may be obscure, or the determining influence may have operated very subtly, but in others the persistence of the "flat" form is easy enough to account for. To notice a few common examples, we can plainly see why *high*, *low*, *near*, *hard*, *late*, and *even* do not take on the conventional *-ly*.

To say, "He threw the ball *highly*," would appear ridiculous, because *highly* is specialized in the figurative sense, "in a high degree"; one says that a dish is "highly seasoned," or that a report is "highly satisfactory." *Low* cannot be replaced by *lowly*, not only because the latter is essentially an *adjective*, but also because it suggests humility or inferior social rank; its proper sense appears in the phrase, "the meek and lowly." The adverb *nearly* suggests too strongly "almost" to supplant *near* (as in fact it formerly did) in the literal sense of "within a short distance." *Hardly* has too definite a meaning of "barely" or "scarcely" to be used now instead of *hard* in such a sentence as "They worked hard," or "He fought hard." Comparison of the two statements, "We have been coming *late* in the afternoon," and "We have been coming *late*ly in the afternoon," reveals a difference of ideas which is quite sufficient to keep *late*ly from driving out *late*. *Even*, in the sense which it has in "even now," "even at the very end," or "He rises early even on Sundays," has a figurative quality distinct from any meaning of *evenly*: "They spread the cement evenly," or "The wall rose evenly all along the line." It is clear, then, that there are obstructions to prevent these adverbs from joining the *-ly* group. Probably all such uninflected adverbs would

otherwise have been drawn into the regular class.

There comes to mind, however, a conspicuous example in which no such differentiation exists: the adverbs *slow* and *slowly* have exactly the same meaning. Since the form *slowly* has not become specialized in any peculiar sense, like that of *highly*, *hardly*, or *late*ly, there would seem to be nothing to prevent it from supplanting *slow* in adverbial use. To some extent, indeed, this result appears to have taken place, and in most contexts *slow*, as an adverb, will hardly sound quite right to the ear of a person who has developed any very definite feeling for correctness in expression. Yet here the influence of grammarians and etymologists has probably counteracted somewhat the natural evolution of our language. Distinguished authorities have defended the uninflected adverbs as "an ancient and dignified part of our language," and have declared that "the pedantry which discountenances them is not to be encouraged."² To people who find satisfaction in rebelling against what they take to be arbitrary rules of grammar, *slow* has been, for obvious reasons, a favorite example for demonstrating the historical respectability of "flat" adverbs. One has the impression that some people actually cultivate the substitution of *slow* where they might be instinctively inclined to say *slowly*. Mr. Fowler, in his *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, admits with an air of regret what he calls "the encroachments of *-ly*," but assures us that "*slow* maintains itself as at least an idiomatic possibility under some conditions."³

It is of course undeniable that the adverb *slow* resulted naturally from the dropping of the unemphatic final syllable

² J. B. Greenough and G. L. Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*, p. 199. Macmillan, 1916.

³ H. W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, p. 542. Oxford, 1927.

of the Old English *slowe*, and that its usage was long taken for granted. It should doubtless be regarded as a survival, not a corruption. But it is equally true that this usage was characteristic of an age whose point of view in such matters was necessarily different from our own, because *-ly* was *not yet recognized* as the typical ending for *adverbs*. At the present time, therefore, deliberate insistence upon the older form begins to savor of archaism, and seems rather an artificial pose. Meanwhile, exceptional idioms may persist here and there in the language for various reasons. Perhaps, for instance, the injunction, "*Go slow*," will retain a permanent position as both natural and correct. If it does, however, the plausible explanation will be not so much a continuing respect for ancient forms as the satisfying sound produced by coupling two monosyllables which rime.

At any rate, those who find *slow* more congenial will be obliged to make concessions. No one with any sense of correctness would say, "The man spoke slow

and careful," because it could not be pretended that *careful* is an adverb. To say, "The man spoke slow and carefully," would seem to emphasize a quaint distinction, and would surely sound ridiculous. Inevitably, then, the sentence will be, "The man spoke slowly and carefully."

So dominant, indeed, has become the feeling for the propriety of the *-ly* ending that it is even used in places where no adverb belongs at all. A common example is the expression, "She feels badly," which is justifiable only if it means that the person's sense of touch is defective.

No doubt there will continue to be careless, cheerful souls who say, "He works *regular*," or "He was hurt *bad*," just as they say, "He done it pretty good," "He don't do so bad," or "He sure got it easy." They will manifest the same obtuseness, the same indifference and insensibility to shades of meaning, in various other ways. So far as the standards of our language are concerned, these people are simply lagging a few centuries behind the times.

Pen Points And Ink Spots

JOHN H. TREANOR

*Washington Irving School
Roslindale, Massachusetts*

PENMANSHIP is the orphan of the school curriculum. It belongs to every department—English, Latin, science, and all the rest. Every teacher takes a hand in it. It belongs to everybody and to nobody. By tacit agreement, born of ingrained custom, the English department gives it a left-hand blessing, without benefit of bell or book. Nobody wants to assume responsibility for the misshapen burden left at the class-room door.

Styles, too, have changed in penmanship. The flowery Spencerian has given place to the stream-lined "manuscript" printing, the cramped finger to the tireless muscle and in between, a conglomeration of ink-spots and mud puddles marks the sable course of a craft apparently beyond the skill of most boys and girls. As David Copperfield remarked, boys and girls are "steeped to the bone in ink"; but for all the instruction, admonition, and sanction, the pupils who are already over-taxed in the invention of composition are submerged in the black tide of execution.

For a long time I had been convinced that pupils write poorly not because it is too hard to write well but because they have observed that most teachers will accept without murmur almost any handwriting that is even remotely legible. Teachers are so glad to get reasonable work punctually done that they perforce overlook the vehicle which carries the freight of scholarship.

Concluding, then, that poor penmanship is a question more of the head than of the hand, of the will than of any ac-

quired ability, I fell upon a simple device that improved the hand-writing of my pupils.

On a certain day I assigned at the beginning of the English period an unusually heavy home-lesson to the several classes which came to my room. Then I went on to say, by way of lightening the gloom which filled the air, that all those who could copy a certain piece of composition from the board, in hand-writing to suit my taste, would be relieved of the home-work, except for a trifling residue. I demonstrated the well-known form of certain troublesome letters,—a-d-g-h-m-t, etc.—extended a caution about the slant, indicated that I wanted letters of a reasonable height, and concluded by saying that it made no difference to me how the pupils wrote so long as they wrote well. "You may write in blue ink, black ink, red ink, green ink; in lemonade or soda-pop; or like Tom Sawyer, in blood, as long as it comes out right."

The trap being well baited, the class went soberly to work, and turned in a set of papers worthy of Mr. Palmer himself.

"Very well," I said.

Then I distributed to each pupil a heavy manila folder about 9 x 12 inches, to hold future English papers. I passed out some mucilage and asked the pupils to paste their masterpieces on the inside page.

"Now," I said, "here we have an excellent set of papers. You are excused from the long home-lesson. But don't forget that if you can write as well as this once, you can do it all the time, if you choose. In these folders there is a

standard of your own making, and if I get any more poorly written papers from you, I'll know that it is plain carelessness."

In the subsequent lessons, I made the pupils check all their written work with the sample pasted in their folders. Any paper which was not up to standard was done over, with some little additional burden by way of discipline. It was astonishing to see the change in penmanship. While the task of checking all the papers meant a daily and rigorous scrutiny of the written work, with a

relentless finger on the pupil's own standard, it transferred the responsibility of good writing to the pupil himself, which is exactly where it belongs. The pupils wrote carefully and therefore slowly. This was an interesting discovery: that when pupils write less they quite generally write better. It confirmed a long-standing suspicion that teachers of English often ask for too much composition; that if they asked for less, as a device of this sort would require them to do, they would get better composition as well as better penmanship.

OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SKILL IN COMMUNICATING IDEAS

(Continued from page 104)

teacher's task in providing adequate instruction in this one important language activity.

3. Because of the complexity of the task, all of the important language skills needed in the communication of ideas cannot be taught adequately through incidental teaching.

4. A well-planned daily language period is essential on every grade level.

5. The language taught in this period must not be isolated. It must be functional and meaningful to pupils. A unit

on making reports at the fifth-grade level illustrates how this may be accomplished.

6. Most of the language taught in the language period can and should be used in connection with all other school work as appropriate language needs arise.

7. Only through the direct teaching of all of the basic language skills a few at a time and in proper sequence, in addition to the sensible use of these skills in all other school subjects, can the school meet its full responsibility in helping pupils develop skill in communicating ideas.

Book Reviews

ANIMALS

Living Treasure. By Ivan T. Sanderson. Illus. by the author. Viking, 1941.

Fascinating accounts of the author's expeditions in British Honduras, Jamaica, and Haiti. The style however, makes it a book for adults rather than for children.

Animals Through the Year. By Margaret Waring Buck. Illus. Rand McNally, 1941. \$2.00

Describes the behavior of familiar animals at each season. Attractive illustrations. A brief index adds to the book's usefulness.

Let's Go to the Seashore. By Harriet E. Huntington. Illus. with photographs by the author. Doubleday Doran, 1941. \$2.00

Each page of text describes some marine creature—sand dollars, periwinkles, starfish, sea anemones, and the like, and is illustrated with a full-page photograph. Designed for children up to nine.

SOCIAL STUDIES

A Primer of Economics. By Stuart Chase. Illus. by Lynd Ward. Random House, 1941. \$1.00

Economy in the machine age explained lucidly. Money, investing, debts, and the possibility of repairing the economic machine are among the subjects treated. An excellent book, possibly unique in the field of children's literature.

The Army in Review. By Curtis Erickson. Illus. Dutton, 1941. \$2.00

Gives much useful information about camp life and the service in general, in narrative form. A timely addition to a young peoples' library.

Our Flag. Pictures by Albert Carman. Text by John Harbourt. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1940. \$1.50

The history of the American flag, simply and interestingly set forth.

The Story of Old Dolls and How to Make New Ones. By Winifred H. Mills and Louise M. Dunn. Illus. by Corydon Bell. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.50

Combines a history of dolls with instructions for making dolls and marionettes out of various materials. There is a list (pages 109-111) of great doll collections in Europe and

in this country, a brief bibliography, and a good index. The book is unusually well illustrated, both with working drawings and with photographs. An exceptionally well-made and satisfactory volume.

FICTION FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Gypsy Goes to College. By Chesley Kahmann. Illus. by C. Le Roy Baldrige. Random House, 1941. \$2.00

In fulfillment of the wishes of her father, Mizela Lee, a gypsy, must attend college for a year. Her experiences with a group of conventional college youngsters makes a novel that skirts improbability, but never dullness. Older girls will enjoy the story.

Island Holiday. By Alice Wright. Illus. by Else Bostelmann. Stokes, 1941. \$2.00

College students on a scientific expedition studying the marine life in the Bermudas.

Roundabout. By Charlie May Simon. Illus. by Howard Simon. Dutton, 1941. \$2.00

The Jordan family lived far back from the highway in the Mississippi woods. When traffic from Number Ten was detoured past their farm, things changed for the children. Mrs. Simon's books are notable for sensitive understanding of her characters, skills in suggesting regional speech, and ability to create an absorbing—even exciting—story out of every-day material.

Forty Faces. By Mary Urmston. Illus. by Martha Sawyers. Doubleday, Doran, 1940.

Jean Madison learns through perplexities, and occasional discouragement, that the thing she really wants to do is to teach school. A well-written and absorbing story for older girls.

Star-Spangled Summer. By Janet Lambert. Illus. by Sandra James. Dutton, 1941. \$2.00

Two girls spend a summer at an army post, riding, picnicing, dancing. Wholesome, if light, reading for older children.

A Place for Ann. By Phyllis A. Whitney. Illus. by Helen Blair. Houghton Mifflin, 1941. \$2.00

Another in the series of fictional treatments of vocations for girls. It is good reading, refreshing, with well-differentiated characters. For older girls.

Editorial

Effectiveness

ONE EFFECT of the present crisis, as of any other crisis, is the evaluation of various systems that we have sometimes placidly, sometimes ardently, accepted. We must now look appraisingly at the results of our economy, commerce, international policies, and education. For the time being, we are no longer interested in theories and methods, in how the thing works. We only want to know, *does it work?*

Articles in this issue reflect this attitude of appraisal. Dr. Milligan (page 85) observes that "No matter how much enthusiasm may be engendered by pursuing ever so worthwhile purposes, some annoying fellow will arise and ask, 'What did you accomplish?'" And he proceeds to furnish the "annoying fellow" with a straight answer. Miss Humphreys discusses "Greater Independence in Written Expression" (page 93). Does our language teaching really "take"? Do children, as a result of our efforts, speak and write better? Specific teaching for specific results is the theme of Miss Guilfoile's and Miss McCowen's practical discussion on pages 88 and 99, while Mr. Treanor describes an assign-

ment (page 109) that has really corrected a fault that composition teachers have found irritating.

Such a turning from speculation, experiment, and investigation for its own sake, to appraisal—the candid, revealing mercury-light of practicality—is, it would seem, wholesome and necessary. We teachers must have recalled to us, occasionally, that we are not primarily research workers; we are practitioners of the art of teaching, and our question must ever be, "Does it work?"

There is another aspect to be considered, too. It is the sobering, even terrifying thought that what is happening now is largely the practical working-out of educational methods and philosophies. Certain educational systems have proved effective—horribly so. Education prepared for the attack on Pearl Harbor and the collapse of France; education of a different sort made possible the evacuation of Dunkirk, and the defense of the Philippines. We are watching our educational theories of the past twenty years being tested. And watching, we shall get answers to two questions: Does it work? and To what end?

NEW



Gay, lively books that children like. .

Sound books that teachers like.

In an English series for grades 2 to 8.

Johnson and others: OUR LANGUAGE

Stimulating true-to-life experiences around which language habits develop naturally.

Sound instruction which provides everything necessary for thorough learning.

Abundant practice, tests, and more practice to insure maintenance of skills.

Full attention to *grammar*.

An interesting informal presentation, with a checked vocabulary to assure ease in understanding at every level.

Sparkling pages, gay with illustrations.

GINN AND COMPANY

Boston New York Chicago Atlanta Dallas Columbus San Francisco



Heath

SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

About Neighboring People and places

NEW WORLD NEIGHBORS

Sixteen books for social studies or recreational reading, planned to further better inter-American understanding. Authentic, fascinating stories of Central and South American, Canadian, and Eskimo children. Written by educators, explorers, and specialists in inter-American relations. Beautifully illustrated in color. Inexpensive. *Ages 9 to 14.*

Decatur: TWO YOUNG AMERICANS IN MEXICO

A boy and girl from the United States enjoy new experiences and make new friends in Mexico. Illustrated. *Ages 9 to 12.*

McMurray: ALL ABOARD FOR ALASKA!

A boy's own story of his vacation trip to Alaska, told in his own words. Many interesting illustrations. *Ages 9 to 12.*

Snedden: DOCAS, THE INDIAN OF SANTA CLARA

Deservedly popular story of the Indians of southern California and the life and customs of early Californians. Illustrated. *Ages 8 to 10.*

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

Boston New York Chicago Atlanta San Francisco Dallas London